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Pets by the Numbers

U.S. Pet Ownership, Community Cat and Shelter Population Estimates



If just one of every five Americans wanting to add a cat or dog to their family in the next year adopted from a shelter or rescue, not one single healthy, treatable cat or dog would lose his or her life in a shelter! Photo by Michelle Riley/The HSUS

Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) which is published every five years. Together these surveys provide data about trends in pet ownership and produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the total number of dogs and cats.

The Numbers

U.S. Pet Ownership Estimates

U.S. PET OWNERSHIP ESTIMATES		
FACT	2012 AVMA SOURCEBOOK	2015-2016 APPA SURVEY
Number of households with a pet	66.5 million (year-end 2011)	79.7 million
Percentage of households with a pet	56% (year-end 2011)	65%
Pet-owning households with more than 1 pet	62.2%	42%
Estimated number of pet dogs and cats	144.1 million	163.6 million
Percentage of pet-owners who consider their pets to be family members	63.2%	
Percentage of pet-owners who consider their pets to be pets or companions	35.8%	
Percentage of pet-owners who consider their pets to be property	1%	
Average amount spent on veterinary care per year per pet (cat or dog)	\$158.50	\$1,288.50

Understanding the Data

Obtaining accurate statistical data about pets in the United States isn't easy. Most of the information is based on estimates derived from surveys, and the various survey-takers don't always agree. Data reflecting shelter/rescue animal populations is spotty due to a lack of reporting requirements, which leaders in animal welfare are aiming to address with the *Shelter Animals Count* project.

There are two main sources of pet demographics in the United States: the biennial *APPA National Pet Owners Survey* by the American Pet Products Association, and the *U.S.*

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